

Project FOCUS

Fall 2001 Semester

Introduction

Louisiana Office Of Alcohol and Tobacco Control Agents have completed the Project FOCUS operation for the fall semester. Project FOCUS (**Fighting Off Campus Underage Sales**) is a proactive enforcement effort directed at unlawful underage sales and possession of alcoholic beverages in the university areas of the state. The Program was developed by ATC, and first put into operation in the Spring 2001 semester, to combat increasing problems involving underage alcohol procurement in these areas. The program is funded through the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's *Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Block Grant*. ATC Staff Officer Louis Thompson is the Programs Manager responsible for administration of the effort.

Operations

Under the program ten university areas were selected across the state which include:

- ?? Baton Rouge
- ?? Hammond
- ?? Lafayette
- ?? Lake Charles
- ?? Monroe
- ?? Natchitoches
- ?? New Orleans
- ?? Ruston
- ?? Shreveport / Bossier
- ?? Thibodaux/Houma

Active enforcement operations are completed in the selected areas during each semester, in addition to the normal enforcement and compliance operations conducted by ATC Agents. These include surveillance, undercover details, patrols of areas where complaints have been received, and compliance operations.

The goals of the operations are not only to reduce the incidence of underage sales, but also to act as a deterrent to illegal possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages by underage persons. Agent presence at these locations and establishments reduces the incidence of both. In addition, initial studies conducted prior to the enforcement operations indicated a higher non-compliance rate in the target area than the 10% state average. ATC strategy is to lower the level in the target area to levels comparable or below the state average.

Results

The Fall 2001 portion of the program ended December 1, 2001 with more than 2600 man-hours devoted to the program. During the period, nearly 700 criminal summons were issued by Agents working the program, as well as a drug arrest. Additionally, 55 administrative violations were issued to retail alcohol beverage establishments.

Compliance operations are currently underway in the target areas to track the non-compliance rate following the enhanced enforcement efforts.